UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
PROGRAM PLANNING AND INTEGRATION
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

To All Interested Government Agencies and Public Groups:

Under the National Environmental Policy Act, an environmental review has been performed on the following action.

TITLE: Environmental Assessment for the Annual Catch Limit Specification for Main Hawaiian Islands Deep 7 Bottomfish in 2011-12 (RIN 0648-XA470)

LOCATION: U.S. EEZ around Hawaii

SUMMARY: The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) will propose an annual catch limit (ACL) of 346,000 lb of main Hawaiian Islands Deep 7 bottomfish during the 2011-12 fishing year, and an annual catch target (ACT) of 325,000 lb as an accountability measure based on the ACL. The Western Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) based these recommendations on a 2010 NMFS bottomfish stock assessment, recommendations from its Scientific and Statistical Committee, and in consideration of public input. To account for management uncertainty, the ACT is six percent lower than the ACL and is intended to prevent the ACL from being exceeded. The ACL and ACT, together with the closure of the fishery when the ACT is reached, are expected to provide for long-term sustainability of Deep 7 bottomfish.

The ACL was developed in accordance with the method prescribed in the Fishery Ecosystem Plan for the Hawaiian Archipelago. The specification is not expected to result in large changes to the size of or manner in which the MHI bottomfish fishery is conducted. The specifications are expected to have positive long-term impacts on fishery participants and the fishing communities by providing for long-term managed use of the MHI bottomfish.

The MHI Deep 7 bottomfish fishery opens on September 1 of each year. NMFS and the State of Hawaii monitor commercial landings and progress toward the ACT. When the ACT is projected to be reached, both the commercial and non-commercial MHI bottomfish fishery are closed for the remainder of the fishing year. If the ACT is not reached, the fishing year ends August 31.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL:

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The environmental review process led us to conclude that this action will not have a significant impact on the environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

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A copy of the finding of no significant impact (FONSI) including the supporting environmental assessment is enclosed for your information.

Although NOAA is not soliciting comments on this completed EA and FONSI, the agency will consider any comments submitted that would assist in preparing future NEPA documents. Please submit any written comments to the Responsible Official named above.

Sincerely,

Paul N. Doremus, Ph.D.
NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure

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